



February 9th, 2023

RE: Written testimony of Adrian Benepe, President of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden for the Joint Budget Hearing on Economic Development, and the Arts

Dear Chairs Krueger and Weinstein, members of the committees,

First, I would like to thank you for your longstanding support of Arts and Culture in New York and for holding this important hearing. I write today as President of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG), a 113-year-old institution situated on 52 acres of public land in the heart of Brooklyn. As with all cultural institutions, BBG has had to overcome a wide range of challenges and obstacles over the last three years. Despite this, we are seeing positive trends in both visitation and membership.

BBG's recovery would not have been possible without the support of our partners in State government and the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). BBG has been fortunate to receive grant funding from NYSCA to support our Art in the Garden series. During this 12-week program, our visitors enjoy musical and dance performances by local artists who reflect the diversity of Brooklyn. Furthermore, the partnerships with local arts organizations and artists allow BBG to put money directly into New York City's creative economy by hiring local artists and performers.

These funding streams are critical to the health and sustainability of the cultural sector in New York City at both the institutional and individual level, and we urge partners in State government to continue funding the cultural sector in New York State.

Thank you again for your leadership and for the opportunity to submit testimony on this critical topic.

Sincerely,

Adrian Benepe
President, Brooklyn Botanic Garden